

Traffic Congestion & Air Quality

Winter/Spring 2003



Over one-third of the air pollutants we breathe in is from transportation sources. The rapidly worsening traffic congestion poses ongoing air quality challenges and health threats to the public — particularly to children, the elderly and other at-risk groups.

How Does Traffic Congestion Affect Our Air Quality?

Traffic congestion means dirtier air. Vehicles such as cars, trucks and buses are already a major source of air pollution, accounting for nearly 30% of emissions produced nationwide. Stop-and-go traffic conditions worsen air quality by producing more pollutants than free-flow conditions.

Further Threats to Mobility and Air Quality

Though air quality in Southern California has improved greatly in the last 30 years, the projected increase of 7 million more people to the region by 2025, an increase in trade and goods movement, and people traveling longer distances may create massive congestion and introduce significantly more vehicle emissions into the air.

What's the Solution?

Improving Southern California's mobility and air quality will require strategic and sensible investments in a transportation infrastructure and innovative management of land use patterns in ways that will accommodate the changing travel patterns and new mobility needs of a burgeoning population. Projects that shape the region's growth along existing and improved major transportation corridors will be critical in improving the level of

congestion, saving travel time and reducing the level of pollution. It will also require a coordinated regional approach to long-term transportation planning on issues such as:

- Highways and arterials
- High Occupancy Vehicle lanes
- Mixed-flow improvements
- Regional transit
- Maglev monorail system
- Truck lanes & railroad grade crossings
- Ports and port access
- Regional aviation system
- Transportation demand management
- New Technologies

What's SCAG's Role?

SCAG is responsible for ensuring that transportation plans and programs are consistent with air quality goals as required by State and Federal rules, a process known as "transportation conformity." SCAG must ensure that transportation activities do not worsen air quality or interfere with the purpose of the State's Implementation Plans (SIPs). To meet this charge, SCAG develops emissions reduction strategies for transportation planning.

For more information, contact Molly Hoffman at 213.236.1804 or hoffman@scag.ca.gov.

<http://www.scag.ca.gov>



Resolving Regional Challenges

818 West 7th St., 12th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90017-3435 213-236-1800